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# SONGS OF THE BAT.

“ Let's join in the praise of the bat and the wicket.”

*Rev. Mr. Cotton of Winchester.*

1892.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Racket, and Niblick, and  
Bladder-filled ball,  
Bow to the Bat, to the  
Monarch of all !

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## SONGS OF THE BAT.

## I.

Willow and cane is all I am, with a wisp of waxen thread,  
 Cane and willow, willow and cane, fondly, perfectly wed ;  
 But never wood for a bounding yacht was picked with a nicer  
 thought,  
 And nothing planned by human hand ever was deftlier wrought.

Willow and cane is all I am ; but here is a wondrous thing :  
 Willow and cane is all I am, yet also am I a king !  
 The flowers of the Earth my subjects are, and the throne of the  
 Cricket Bat  
 Is English muscle and English youth, and who has a throne like that ?

The Sword is great, but he rules by hate, rules with a bloody hand ;  
 Honesty, peace, and comradeship are symbols of *my* command.  
 Scour the world and you shall not find the like of the power I wield,  
 For the home of the brave, the strong, the free, is the joyous  
 Cricket field.

A century old is the crown I hold, nothing disturbs my reign ;  
 And men to me will bend the knee while centuries more shall wane ;  
 Never a king won worthier deeds betwixt the frozen poles,  
 And never a king could proudly sing of half such gallant souls.

Look at their tanned and blameless brows, look at their fearless eyes ;  
 The radiant health of a buoyant form is Nature's dearest prize !  
 Hour by hour they strain for me till the red sun drops in the west,  
 For every man has a hero's heart thumping away in his breast.

Ministers great have nursed my State, Beldham, and Pilch, and Grace,  
 Body and soul for the Commonweal, snapping their thumbs at  
 "place ;"

And Homers true have sped my fame—Nyren and Ward and Gale,  
 Genial men with a simple pen telling a deathless tale.

Willow and cane is all I am, yet look at the hosts I sway ;  
And never a boy but smiles with joy as he grips me in the fray.  
A level mead is all I need, that is my regal hall,  
A level mead, and a gentle breeze, and the great sun over all.

My rule extends to England's friends under the Southern Cross,  
And all may see, wherever you be, my palaces paved with moss ;  
My realm embraces the teeming globe—and who has a realm like  
that ?

For courage and zeal have ever been leal to the throne of the  
Cricket Bat !

## II.

O to face swift bowling  
On a perfect wicket,  
    'Mid eleven foemen  
    Bent upon your flight !  
He who's poured his soul in,  
Hero-kindling Cricket—  
    He has lived his moment,  
    He has plumbed delight !

Men may seek emotions,  
Taste them by the million ;  
    But—to leap to meet her,  
    Meet the flying ball,  
Grandly then to lift her  
Over the pavilion,  
Gives a thrill that's sweeter,  
Sweeter than them all !

## III.

My love is red as a damask rose,  
And lovers true are we,  
Though ever I strive to belabour her,  
And she to outwit me ;  
And yet alone we pine and moan,  
We cannot rejoice at all,  
For what is a ball without a bat,  
Or a bat without a ball ?

We never embrace but we often kiss,  
We only meet to part ;  
The farther away I send my love,  
The gladder I am at heart ;  
And glad is she to torture me,  
Gladder to see me fall,  
Yet strong is the love of the ball for the bat  
And the love of the bat for the ball !

Her skin is smooth as a Ribston ripe,  
Her heart is O so hard !  
And enemy-like she plots and plans  
To catch me off my guard ;  
Yet she is the only love I love,  
And I am her all in all ;  
No stranger thing on the earth is seen  
Than the marriage of bat and ball

## IV.

Twenty-two Englishmen, blithesome and vigorous,  
Throw on your flannels, and haste to the game ;  
Greet the Earth-mother, and meet the sun face to face,  
Offer your brows for the kiss of his flame !  
Children of Midsummer, Sons of the Open Air,  
Here in this elm-girt and daisy-lit field,  
Here 'mid the song o' birds, here 'mid the hum o' noon,  
Pitch we our wickets—and die ere we yield !

Is there a braver sight, say, in the universe ?  
Match me, you painter, this scene for a pound !—  
Over our meadow the hazy blue firmament,  
Shadows of purple on emerald ground.  
Then, scattered near and far, see my bright warriors,  
Stout of heart, clean of limb, steady of eye ;  
Health is their Goddess, and nobly they worship her,  
Here in her grassy fane domed by the sky.

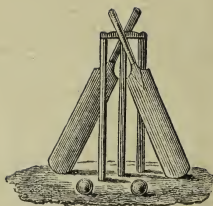
Ah, how the flashing bat thrashes the careless ones !  
Mark how my warriors spring o'er the turf !  
Hear the flushed veterans living brave days again,  
There in the cider-tent white as the surf !  
Hark, how the lusty palms beat exultation out !  
Scorer, old fellow, your fingers grow sore !  
Listen, three cheers, English cheers, for the cricketers !  
Listen, the elm-trees re-echo the roar !

## V.

The *ping!* and kick of the rifle,  
The *swish!* and gleam of the steel,  
Faster they make the stout heart beat,  
And the senses riot and reel.  
Fierce is the joy of the soldier  
Hewing away for lives :  
But the batsman knows a finer joy  
When he opens his shoulders and drives !

The *bang!* of the double-barrel,  
The *plob!* of the fallen bird,  
They pump the blood to the sunburned cheek,  
And manhood's soul is stirred.  
Keen is the joy of the fowler  
Blazing amid the ruts :  
But the batsman knows a rarer thrill  
When he swings on his hips and cuts !

Grand is the din of battle,  
Sweet are the sounds of sport—  
The merry tune of a full-cry pack,  
The war-steed's angry snort.  
But O most dear to the English ear  
Of all the sounds that sing,  
Is the short sharp *tat!* of a well-built bat,  
And the swelling cheer from the ring



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